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ABSTRACT

This report, based on a conference of international lecturers and academics and organized by Education International, notes that the number of college students has significantly increased over the last 2 decades while spending on almost every aspect of higher education has declined over the same time period. It warns that standards could plummet unless governments examine how to deliver high quality, rather than low cost, education. The conference included nine working groups that discussed: quality in education; distance learning and new technologies; the role of research; the management and governance of higher education institutions; the funding of higher education and research; the labor market and society institutional autonomy and accountability; the rights and freedom of teachers in higher education; and terms and conditions of employment. The conference sought to reaffirm the basic principles that should underpin education and to identify the kind of social partnership that can deliver efficient, effective, and creative teaching. Solutions fell into three areas: using information and communication technology; reducing labor costs, and seeking alternative funding sources. Two appendixes present the conference agenda and a list of participants. (SM)

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# International Conference on Higher Education

## A Teacher's Perspective

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Paris, 19-21 March 1997

Education International

# International Conference on Higher Education Report

## A Teachers' Perspective

Paris, 19-21 March 1997

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# Foreword

The first International Conference organised by Education International on higher education issues was the fruit of a close co-operation with UNESCO. This Conference brought together nearly 120 participants from 40 countries from 19 to 21 March 1997 in UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

This conference was an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the challenges facing higher education on the one hand, and for the elaboration of a "Teachers Perspective" on all these issues on the other. This perspective has been further developed through this brochure aimed, among other things, at providing an overview of EI's contribution to the planning and preparation of the World Conference to be held by UNESCO in Paris from 5 to 9 October 1998.

Today, more than 650,000 teachers/researchers, researchers and education personnel of higher education institutions are affiliated to EI member organisations. They are the ones who are responsible for the everyday running of higher education, who guarantee the teaching, and who enable advances in knowledge to be made through their research activities.

To a large extent, the success of the development of higher education and its effectiveness depend on their tenacity, their sense of innovation, and their level of quality training. So greater attention should be paid to them, but above all we should also pay attention to the necessary respect for their academic freedom and to the quality of their working conditions. This is why Education International firmly committed itself to the process which led to the adoption, by UNESCO's General Conference in October/November 1997, of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel.

All the discussion themes debated during the nine workshops represent concerns of greater or lesser degree, for all national higher education and research systems and their personnel.

This publication contains the main reflections and ideas on which EI's Conference was based. Furthermore, these results contributed to the drawing up of the Draft Resolution on Higher Education and Research Policy which will be submitted to

the next EI Congress and which will act as a set of guidelines for the activities which EI will carry out over the coming years in this sector.

You will find the themes developed firstly in the introduction with the contribution of Professor Justin Thorens as well as representatives from the World Bank, OECD, ILO and UNESCO and secondly from the working groups.

It is now time to think and work together with all those who, respecting diversity and specificity, have at heart the development of a high-quality higher education, which is necessary to equip the society of the third millennium, characterised by democracy and solidarity.

Fred van Leeuwen

General Secretary

# Introduction

At the root of the crisis facing the higher education sector lies a paradox. Governments everywhere stress the role higher education can play in the development of society and in economic progress. They are presiding over an unprecedented rise in the number of regular students and a change in the way we view learning that could make students of us all. Yet the sector already costs more than they seem prepared to pay. Whatever the rhetoric, most of the policies and strategies designed for so-called improvements in education are to do with keeping public spending down; they are formulated with financial rather than educational criteria in mind, with the result that the crisis has deepened.

Education International organised this International Conference on Higher Education to look at the crisis from the teachers' perspective; to ask the right questions in the right order.

The conference devolved into nine working groups to examine particular themes:

- quality in education;
- distance learning and new technologies;
- the role of research;
- the management and governance of higher education institutions;
- the funding of higher education and research;
- the labour market and society;
- institutional autonomy and accountability;
- the rights and freedom of teachers in higher education;
- terms and conditions of employment.

The starting point was to focus on educational quality, and on the components of a system that would guarantee that quality. The financial and managerial aspects cannot be ignored. Teachers live in the real world. They know that the bills have to be paid, and deadlines have to be met. But the central concern is how we design and develop an educational policy that will deliver the high level of skills needed in the 21st century. From that standpoint, the conference aimed to reaffirm the basic principles that should underpin education, and to identify the kind of social partnership that can deliver efficient, effective and creative teaching.

The opening speeches set the parameters for the debates of the working groups. EI General Secretary Fred Van Leeuwen reminded the delegates at the start of the conference that *universal access* is the most important principle at stake - as set down in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: everyone has the right to education, and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. This is not negotiable. Aside from the moral imperative, it makes sound practical sense. Given the rising demand for skills inspired by the information age, denying people the chance to put their talents to good use on grounds of cost is a false economy.

*Academic freedom* is also essential. The demands of the marketplace cannot be ignored. But they are best served by a partnership between higher education and the world of business based on openness and mutual trust. This cannot be achieved if

education is subordinated to market forces. New programmes and new curricula will have to be defined in harmony with the social partners; but the freedom of teachers and the autonomy of institutions must not be infringed.

Nor should the state seek to control higher education. Many governments are granting institutions greater internal autonomy, but then limiting this by a system of incentives and sanctions, or by setting targets for academic results.

*Public funding* is the third pillar. The state should continue to be the main paymaster. That is the only way to guarantee a publicly accountable and democratic education system. Private funds are vital, especially for research projects, but they should complement rather than replace public funds. Access for all and academic freedom could be threatened by excessive dependence on big business.

JAN SADLAK from UNESCO outlined some of the themes which would dominate the conference:

- the rapid growth and diversification of the student population;

Since the beginning of the century, the number of students has increased by a factor of 50 in France; by a factor of 85 in Japan and by a factor of 60 in the USA. The trend is not confined to the industrialised countries. There are 21 times more students in Saudi Arabia now than there were 25 years ago.

A key factor accelerating the growth is the greater demand for higher education from mature students – a 'catch-all' phrase that fails to do justice to the wide variety of backgrounds and levels of educational attainment within this group.

Continuing expansion is vital to meet the skill needs of the next century. It is estimated that in the next decade 40 per cent of all jobs in the industrialised countries will require 16 years of schooling, and 60 pr cent will require a high school diploma. So the policy of open access has to be carried on for economic as well as social reasons. But Mr. Sadlak pointed out that it is not risk-free. The problems of the quality of the students, the organisation and content of studies, the teaching methods etc., are obvious, and suggest no easy answers.

- the economic condition of the sector;

Mr. Sadlak was blunt about the current economic state of higher education: money did not follow the students, as was shown by the wages of academic staff - "a grim story", to use his exact words. He gave the United Kingdom as a fairly typical example of the way wages had fallen and workloads had increased in direct proportion to the expansion of the sector. At the beginning of the 1970s, the UK lecturers' union, the AUT said that its members at the top of their pay scale earned much the same as Members of Parliament and civil servants. By 1996, MPs were earning £43,000; civil servants were earning £39,324; but academics were earning £26,430.

Spending per student is also declining, and sooner or later, this will be reflected in the quality of education. Higher education will simply cease to be attractive to the brightest and best as a career. Nor will it be able to draw in those with an established record in industry and business who would contribute greatly to enriching teaching and research.

PROFESSOR JUSTIN THORENS from the UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA, looked at the role of the university on the eve of the 21st century, and how it could evolve naturally from their historical role if their traditions of autonomy and freedom were protected. He singled out three characteristics:

- Universities had always been international in character, and were therefore perfectly designed for the information age.
- The relationship between student and teacher was essentially that of master and apprentice - a proven way of transmitting knowledge that had all but vanished from the modern world.
- And they were the only institutions devoted solely to the pursuit of knowledge for its own ends - a vital principle to preserve in a world dominated and driven by the short-term needs of the marketplace.

However, he stressed that these characteristics should not be used as an excuse to isolate universities in some privileged ivory tower. They did not exist solely for their own benefit. Their autonomy and their academic freedom were sacrosanct; but the demand for mass education meant that they had to be responsive to the needs of society.

This raised concerns for the intellectual well-being of universities. The demands of the market, the vast increase in the number of students, and the concept of lifelong learning were leading to the proliferation of subject areas and to a far greater degree of specialisation. It was important, he felt, to try and maintain a multidisciplinary approach to higher education so as to build a more general basis for higher education studies. Students embarking on the degrees often changed course; sometimes they made the wrong choice during their first year. It was essential that they began with a solid but flexible cultural foundation that would allow them to be intellectually and academically mobile.

This was not simply an educational matter. Society itself needed students in all disciplines to have as broad an educational base as possible The social and cultural well-being of any society depended on its knowledge and appreciation not only of its own culture, but also of that of other countries and civilisations. This was essential if there was to be dialogue and understanding between people and nations. A broad education is one of the most effective weapons in the battles against racism and xenophobia. It is important for citizens to know that many hands from many countries have carried the flame of civilisation, and that their own history is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of the history of the world.

He asked how it was possible, for example, to come to an understanding of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia without some knowledge of the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires, and the historical struggle between Rome and Constantinople. Education was not simply a matter of transferring skills, but of imparting knowledge and understanding in its broadest sense.

BRUNO LAPORTE from the WORLD BANK expressed his organisation's commitment to education. Since 1944, the Bank had invested $345 billion on 6,500 projects in 180 countries, and there was no doubt that it had been money well spent. Education was the surest route out of poverty and inequality for developing countries.

He reaffirmed the Bank's belief that the role of the state had to change. In several projects, the Bank was encouraging competition between the public and private sector. This did not mean the privatisation of education, but the Bank did believe in more private funding, greater efficiency, targeted support for institutions and students, and a better system of incentives. He pointed out that public spending on education was declining around the world, and the Bank was hard-pressed to persuade governments to switch spending from areas like defence to education.

However, he did call for more dialogue between Education International and the World Bank, and invited suggestions as to areas where the two organisations could co-operate.

COLIN POWER, UNESCO'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, was concerned that the university no longer seemed the obvious route for learning. The traditional lecture, sometimes with one teacher talking to as many as 400 students, had been the principle teaching method for centuries. Would mass education and lifelong learning make the lecture redundant?

He also warned of the threat posed to teachers' working conditions by the new educational climate. In his own country, working hours had increased, and teachers had little or no confidence in appraisal systems. Education International should make sure the conference produced a statement of principles, especially on protecting teachers' terms and conditions.

GEORGE HADDAD echoed Colin Power's concerns about the way market forces were dominating education. He said that people in the sector needed shaking up, and welcomed the wide range of delegates and observers that Education International had invited to the conference.

PIERRE LADERRIÈRE from the OECD spoke of the globalisation of education, stressing that it was no longer a matter of offering special courses for foreign students and exchange visits for students and professors. In many universities, globalisation has become rooted in the very programmes and structures of the university – a trend which was likely to continue for decades.

Higher education has therefore been affected like any other sector by the world-wide trend towards deregulation and greater mobility and flexibility of labour. This is reflected in moves to achieve global recognition of national qualifications. An international convention on recognition was signed in Lisbon last year under the auspices of the Council of Europe and UNESCO. But despite this and other efforts, such as by the European Commission, the pace is still too slow. There is still a need to look at the extent to which foreign staff are gaining access to local colleges and universities. The global economy will want skills and personnel that are easily transferable from one location to another. However complex the issue, and however difficult to resolve, there is a pressing and growing need to rationalise and harmonise professional and vocational qualifications all around the world. Armed with the background from the keynote speakers, the participants broke up into their working groups and went to work. The conference did not produce solutions; but it did clarify the trade union alternative to the free-market ideology that is dominating education. It showed that there is a distinctive trade union voice with clear analysis, concepts and vision for higher education and research for the next century.

# Synthesis

The more politicians talk about the crucial role of higher education and research for the development of society and economy, the more they cut the budgets for academic work. Expectations are growing faster than the money which is provided to analyse economical changes, to develop concepts against mass unemployment, hunger, illiteracy, sexual discrimination or xenophobia and military conflicts. Instead of motivating teachers and researchers, politicians are doing everything to frustrate them.

EI organised this conference on higher education and research – its first sectoral conference – to show that there are trade union alternatives to the current policies in most of our countries. We have shown with our conference that there is a distinctive trade union voice – with clear concepts and visions for higher education and research for the next century.

More than 120 colleagues from 42 countries from all parts of the world took part in this Conference. They represent 650,000 EI members in higher education and research institutions. Representatives of UNESCO, OECD, ILO, TUAC and the International Association of Universities also participated

We formulated five goals for our conference :

- to start a common dialogue on the future of higher education and research;
- to disseminate information about the work of the international organisations;
- to elaborate our policies and strategies in discussion with the international organisations;
- to discuss the worsening financial conditions under which we have to do our work;
- to strengthen our position in and with EI.

It is fair to say that the conference achieved its goals. It brought clarity. We learned who our partners are and how our opponents are arguing. We learned that no one, neither the international organisations or the governments, nor the higher education and research institutions or the trade unions will be able to solve the severe problems alone; to bring about the inevitable structural changes. We have to find common ways – we have to build up a new alliance for higher education and research – we are sentenced to unity.

Colin Power, Justin Thorens, Georges Haddad and Fred van Leeuwen showed in the opening session that this co-operation is possible. Thanks for their inspiring ideas.

It will be a long way, with a lot of barriers we have to move. We have to convince policy makers that "top-down" is not the approach to find supporters for change. Without integration into the decision-making processes, you will not

challenge the engagement of people, you need to develop the power for change. But we also have to see that "bottom up" is a wish not yet realised. Necessary is a new relationship between state interventions and activities in the individual institutions, a new balance between public accountability and autonomy. In this process, a renewed trade union movement has to play a crucial role. The consequence is "innovation through participation".

The core of our conference consisted of nine working groups (see next items) in which we elaborated common positions and new ideas. They pointed us in the right direction, and based on their reports and the plenary sessions, we have set out proposals for the EI action programme for the years 1998 to 2000. Now the hard work of carrying them out that programme can begin.

*Taken from the General Report by Gerd Köhler,*

*Chairman of the EI Sectoral Standing Committee for Further and Higher Education*

# Reports from the working groups

## Quality in education; how can we develop and assess it; and what will be its impact on professional development?

Summary

The group looked at quality in education; how to define it; how to develop and assess it; and what effect introducing the concept of quality might have on professional development. The discussion focused on the need to make sure quality is based on educational and not economic criteria – especially at a time when governments are under pressure to keep public spending down, while getting many more people into higher education. EI was urged to get fully involved in the debate, and to stress that one of the best guarantees of high-quality education and research is to give teachers high-quality wages and conditions, and to involve them in policy- and decision-making structures at all levels.

### Quality in education

There is world-wide debate about how to raise the quality of higher education in the face of greater numbers of students and massive pressures on funding. The group stressed that teachers and teachers' unions are not blind to the economic imperative. They recognise that there are two key criteria for assessing educational quality: are courses relevant to the needs of the students; and are they satisfying the needs of the labour market for skilled personnel? It is because they know that the real issue is not one of cost but of cost-effectiveness that they are committed to quality, and to stressing that necessary resources must be found.

The key questions teachers needed to ask about quality were:

- what role will teachers play in deciding quality policies and in carrying out evaluations?
- who will set the agenda?
- how will quality affect the links between teaching and research?
- what professional development will be in place to maintain quality in teaching?
- will pressure on funding squeeze out quality?

### Deciding on policies and carrying out evaluations

The group warned that it should not be taken for granted that new ways of assessing quality are needed. They had to be justified and prove their merits

against traditional methods; and they had to be aimed at improving education, and not, as was often the case, improving management systems.

This will only happen if teachers and researchers have a key role to play in setting the policies for achieving quality, and in making sure those policies are carried out. These issues will need to be taken up in ways that suit national systems and cultures; but there are certain basic principles which the group stressed should apply everywhere:

- teachers and researchers must be involved as of right in policy-making and evaluation within institutions and groups of institutions, and at national level;
- once the policies are processes are in place, academics themselves must carry out the evaluation;
- governments and institutions must pay heed to quality policies when allocating resources;
- any expansion of higher education must take account of the need to defend quality.

## Setting the agenda

Unions had to set the agenda in the debate about quality. Some were concerned that quality evaluation could be used to take control of educational establishments and set up a 'league table' system. Often the real issue at stake was funding, with the result that quality was determined by economic, rather than educational criteria. The unions had to challenge this notion, and establish a clear agenda based on the principle that staff must feel they own and control such systems within their own institutions.

Students too had a role to play in assessing teachers, but it had to be focused to be effective. They could, for example, usefully comment on how well their teachers communicated, and how clearly they expressed themselves; but they were not in a position to decide on course content, or assess the relevance of courses.

A South African representative warned that quality systems in her country were used to discriminate against disadvantaged people, and an Argentinean delegate warned that academic freedom could be threatened if quality criteria and evaluation processes were set by those outside education. Self-assessment backed by peer assessment should be the backbone of any evaluation system, and academic freedom should be sacrosanct.

## The links between teaching and research

Teachers' unions should raise the issue of the relationship between teaching and research. There had to be a balance between the external evaluation of this relationship and how the teachers themselves assessed it within their own institutions.

Research is a vital element of a university's mission, and it should be built into any process of quality assessment. Trade unions should press for access to

research and to scholarships to be seen as part of the normal working conditions of all academic institutions.

Assessing research is itself problematic. The group was split on the question of how this should be done. Some felt peer assessment through publication or citation was adequate; others felt it was not sufficient. This debate will need to be resolved, and it was suggested that EI produce materials reflecting best practice on quality evaluation in higher education and research, and a brief statement of key principles. EI should also build links with UNESCO to develop its policies in this area.

Professional development and quality

Skill-levels are a key factor in promoting quality in any profession or service, and all the more so in the fast-changing world of education. Great claims are being made for how computers could transform the classroom, with teachers becoming "facilitators of learning". Some of these claims are overstated; but new technology will change the role of teachers, and teachers will need to keep pace with new knowledge and techniques. Any process of quality evaluation has therefore to include opportunities for professional development and life-long learning for teachers and researchers.

EI itself could pay a role here by promoting educational research into new methods of teaching in higher education, and into the implications of new technology.

Will pressure on funding squeeze out quality?

Concern for quality is being driven by the growing emphasis on the need to get more people into higher education and, paradoxically, on the need to control public spending. The trade unions need to make it clear that they support quality, and that it is they who are working to protect it from economic pressures.

Can governments say the same? Sometimes their objectives are confused. Public institutions are assessed, while private ones are not. Diversification of institutions, privatisation, short-course cycles – all these and more were items on the political agenda that lay behind the quality debate.

Unions are concerned that many governments are using quality assessments to disguise or justify budget cuts. This is leading to a growth in casual employment, and huge increases in the workload throughout the higher education sector which is actually damaging quality.

These processes often lead to crude ranking of academic institutions. There is a place for some kind of benchmark system, but any such system will involve evaluation processes that are difficult to define, and the objectives must be clear.

The group urged unions to make a clear assessment of government strategies and how they really affect the quality debate.

## Conclusion

The main concern of the group was to look at how to establish clear principles that must underpin in the quality debate; develop guidelines to help teachers establish their role in that debate; and clarify the role of others, especially governments.

The group's conclusions were:

- EI should insist that the criteria for quality evaluation should be educational not economic, and should be based firmly on the role of teachers;
- the political agenda behind the quality debate should be clear;
- academic and the concept of education as public service should be firmly defended;
- the links between education and research should be maintained, and should feature strongly within any quality evaluation process. EI should build links with UNESCO to develop its policies in this area;
- teachers and their union representatives should be involved at all levels throughout the policy development and the evaluation process;
- EI should stress the need to maintain high quality wages and conditions as the best guarantee of high-quality education;
- quality evaluation must include opportunities for professional development and life-long learning for teachers and researchers;
- There was a danger that evaluation methods focused too much on quantity rather than quality – and that the evaluation itself was seen as improving quality, whereas it might be merely measuring a decline.

# Distance learning and new technologies in higher education

Summary

The group looked at whether information and communication technology (ICT) can deliver what is expected of it. Will it bring unlimited access to unlimited information at next to no cost? Or will it simply be another excuse for governments to cut budgets, and another means of widening the information gap between the developed and the developing world? The conclusion was that the debate is not really about the technology itself. That is merely the form; what matters – just as is the case with any medium – is content and control.

## Distance learning and new technologies in higher education

ICT has made a huge impact on higher education. The vast amount of new information available has increased the pressure on academics to specialise. The Internet has become a "digital lifeline" linking campuses and scholars across and within countries regardless of distance or frontiers. It has given students the chance to become active learners in a way that traditional institutions never could.

To take full advantage of this, there is no doubt that people entering the labour market now and in the future will need new technological skills. Paradoxically, however, ICT has also increased the need for students to be well versed in the traditional skills of absorbing and evaluating knowledge. And as yet, its impact seems limited to certain programmes and disciplines. The traditional academic toolbox of book, blackboard and lectern is far from obsolete.

Yet there are those who see ICT as a way of changing the academic world. Governments have seized on it as a way of resolving their most acute political dilemma as they shape their educational policies (and one touched upon in other sections of this publication): how to increase access to higher education without increasing costs.

## Learning on the cheap

Distance learning can be a unique way of getting more people into higher education. But successful distance learning programmes must be developed with the same discipline and thoroughness as are applied to in-house courses. They need careful planning; highly motivated students; and a huge investment of time and resources by the faculty.

The temptation, however, is simply to replace the faculty and increase the number of students, thereby generating a meaningless increase in 'productivity'. EI must challenge this view that ICT can be used to deliver high-quality distance

learning on the cheap. The bottom line will look better; but educational quality will suffer.

### Assessing the real costs of ICT

The short-term view that ICT will save money is based on a failure to assess the real costs of ICT, and the complexity involved in introducing it successfully. These include:

- cabling and hardware installation;
- maintaining and replacing equipment;
- training the users;
- paying for software licences;
- recruiting system support staff.

Upgrading costs can also be substantial. ICT hardware has a limited shelf-life, and one that is decreasing by the day.

### The information gap

These costs can be a great strain even on wealthy institutions; they can be beyond the reach of poorer ones. The result will be the widening of the 'information gap' within and between countries. ICT can be used to bridge this gap only if there is a commitment to make the necessary financial and infrastructural investment. The temptation, however, is for the rich countries to give the developing world their technological cast-offs. Educational International must guard against this. Developing countries are the ones who most need to use ICT effectively; giving them clapped-out kit will only make them fall further behind.

### Intellectual property

The question of the ownership of intellectual property is a secondary issue, but a crucial one. Traditionally, the faculty has held full ownership of the material they have produced. This was easy to police when the medium was print; but it has become much more problematic with digital media (software, video, etc.).

As well as the ease with which such material is transmitted and copied, the much greater financial reward has led many institutions to claim ownership. EI and its affiliates must develop policies and strategies to protect their members from exploitation, and to safeguard the copyright of their work.

### Who is in control?

The one thread that runs through all these concerns is the question of who controls the way ICT is used in higher education. The group's view was very firmly that control should lie with the faculty. The primary focus has to be on what is being taught, rather than on how the courses are delivered.

The real challenge posed by ICT to higher education is not how it can be used to save money, but how it can be integrated into a coherent academic programme. Its potential is massive; it can lead to new methodologies; it can help create courses tailored to individual students; and it can link researchers all over the world and help close the information gap between rich and poor countries. But all this will only happen if educational quality, rather than budgetary considerations, lies at the heart of ICT policies. And that means that the academics themselves should have the major say in developing those policies, and bringing ICT into higher education.

If this is to happen, it will need a change in teacher-training programmes on an unprecedented scale, and the committed support of all sectors of education. Higher education has to focus on the technological needs of elementary and secondary teaching so that future students come prepared. Teachers themselves must learn to use and to teach with ICT. The aim should be to move beyond technology as tool, and to use it as part of the learning process. This is the only way they can assert control over the content of courses, rather than see curriculum development turned over to commercial interests.

Conclusion

The group focused its concerns into three main areas:

- Guidelines for EI members dealing with ICT and distance learning

1. Educational quality must be the priority.
2. The faculty should be an integral part of the decision-making process.
3. Programmes should be subject to normal curriculum guidelines.
4. Pay and conditions should be commensurate with those for teachers in the classroom, with full recognition of the extra work involved.
5. Intellectual property rights should be protected.
6. Distance learning programmes should not be used to cut budgets.
7. Contracts should include health and safety clauses relating to the use of monitors and keyboards.
8. Academic freedom should be protected.
9. There should be a central point of access wherever individual students or an individual faculty has no linkup to ICT.
10. Institutions should maintain an adequately funded and staffed network support system.
11. International bodies such as the World Bank and UNESCO should look at ways of promoting equal access to ICT.

12. These and other international bodies and EI should collaborate to guarantee open access to all, and to ensure that local content is available on-line.

13. Higher education must focus on giving students basic information skills regardless of the medium of instruction.

- Policy statement on distance education

  The goal of technology in education is to enhance learning, and get more people into higher education through distance learning.

  Distance learning programmes must be developed according to the same criteria applied to in-house programmes.

  The focus at all times should be on increasing educational quality and on increasing access to education.

  Due regard must be paid to any extra work involved in teaching via distance learning, and staff should receive the appropriate workload credit.

  Distance learning should support and enhance in-house courses, and should not be used to cut costs.

  Basic information skills should be part of all higher education programmes for all students.

- Policy statement on intellectual property rights

  The faculty should have full ownership of, and control over their intellectual property. Where the property is developed through institutional support and using institutional facilities, agreement should be reached in advance as to how ownership is shared between the institution and the individual staff member.

## The role of research

Summary

Neither government nor industry doubt the vital role played by research in boosting economic prosperity. However, as the world become competitive, the pressure grows for research aimed at getting new products to the market place quickly, as against pure research that will yield new insights whose immediate value is unproven. Could this be distorting the concept of research, and the academic infrastructure upon which it is based? The group aimed to answer this question by examining the relationships between all the separate bodies involved, and their roles in driving research forward.

### The role of research

Economic prosperity depends on a well-educated work force that can create and market sophisticated and innovative products - and these in turn depend to a large extent on research and development. However, commercial pressures demand applied research aimed solely at making new products.

There is also political pressure on governments to get more students into universities - but there is no corresponding increase in the funding for research done by faculty members.

Both the public and the private sector need to rethink their attitude to research and to each other. The public sector has the research capability which industry needs; and the private sector has the funds to support research which society needs.

### Strategies for research

Financial restraints have led many countries to set up national research strategies to develop the research capacity of their educational institutions. The group stressed three objectives they felt should be included in such strategies:

- there should be research-based teaching on offer at universities;
- researchers should be free to choose their own topics for investigation, inspired solely by scientific curiosity;
- the aim should be to generate knowledge that will help solve problems in society as a whole – to do research based on criteria from the scientific community, and from a commitment to meet broader social needs.

The different roles of research have to be acknowledged. In particular, administrators and industrialists who seek to influence the direction of public research must be aware of its complexity, especially when they are deciding on funding.

Funding – the public sector's role

There is less money directed at basic research and more for applied research, especially in developing countries. In developed countries, public resources are being channelled into specific research programmes typically lasting for up to five years. Pure research, however, demands a much longer time-frame, and therefore stable, multi-annual funding.

The lack of funds for pure research forces universities to apply to national and international research programmes. But these are often short-term, and leave no scope for testing new ideas. Public sector researchers have to navigate their way through these programmes, and either pick the ones most closely related to their products, or change their topics to fit the aims of the programme.

These programmes will even eat into the funding for basic research. They rarely cover all the overheads, and any shortfall, be it rooms, library facilities, or clerical support, has to be met from facilities intended for basic research.

And there is often a 'tit-for-tat' policy in operation which forces universities to contribute to the funding of these programmes. This again reduces the funding for basic research, and for investment in new equipment.

External sources will continue to play a major role in funding research by universities. However, governments must take care that directed programmes do not become too large in relation to the funding of pure research. The public sector must take responsibility for ensuring the long-term future of pure research and educating new researchers.

The private sector

Many researchers are leaving universities to work in private research institutions where there are usually better working conditions, and better equipment.

These institutions mostly offer applied research. However, they have to do some pure research so that staff can keep abreast of new developments. Funding and managing this is vital in this sector as well.

Private companies mostly choose research programmes that will deliver new products quickly, though they fund some pure research. How much varies from company to company. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not as a rule have enough working capital to invest in research. They need public sector support if they are to benefit from research and development.

Co-operation between the sectors

There is thus no clear dividing line between the public and private sector when it comes to research needs. There has to be co-operation, and it is the public sector which should initiate and develop that co-operation, especially with SMEs. This means establishing rules and agreements on working conditions that will give teachers/researchers academic freedom and the opportunity to plan their careers.

Decision-makers have to be made aware that the real need is for investment in human capital, rather that just in new product-lines. Current policy is leading to

short-term investment which is delivering immediate results, but at the expense of original and creative insights.

The implications for teaching

More students are entering higher education; more colleges are gaining university status; and there is greater pressure to offer lifelong learning to the whole labour force. These changes are making it harder to maintain research-based teaching for all universities.

This question need to be discussed by institutions, governments, *and* trade unions, especially as it relates to funding. The unions need to be involved in the central funding decisions, and not merely in the allocation of funds within institutions. They should also have a strategy of their own on getting funds for pure research.

And it should be recognised that there are specific employment issues here which unions are entitled to discuss, such as:

- dividing working hours between research and teaching;
- keeping the teaching load in balance;
- determining class sizes;
- library and equipment provision.

Teaching and research

External funding generally leads to staff coming in on short-term contracts. They bring in fresh ideas expertise and knowledge - but they do not teach. This means the research is rooted in the staff rather than in the institutions. When there are more contract staff than full-timers, the institutions cease to accumulate new understanding, which undermines research-based teaching.

Universities are employers with responsibilities to their staff, and unions have to remind them of that fact. They should look carefully at the career development on offer, as well as at other terms and conditions of employment and see how they affect the proportion of permanent and short-term staff.

The balance between these two will affect the balance between teaching and research - which universities have to get right if they are to turn out the highly qualified graduates to do the next generation of research. The material published by university researchers is the basis for the professional development of teachers in all higher education institutions.

Research and ethics

New research will always provoke ethical questions - as evidenced by current debates about nuclear technology, genetic engineering and virology. The trade unions should play their part in these debates in co-operation with established ethical bodies and committees. However, they should ensure that

intellectual freedom is protected, and that attempts to generate new knowledge are not stifled. Two key issues present themselves:

*Market forces*

Research is inspired and even controlled by the demands of the market. The ownership of intellectual property is becoming a growing problem because of this. The principle that knowledge should be freely available should be safeguarded, but there will have to be agreements on rights and royalties.

*Freedom of movement*

The Internet has increased co-operation between researchers, but professional mobility is still crucial. Unions should work to promote the free movement of researchers, in particular by working to reduce administrative barriers to employing visiting professors.

## Conclusion

A successful research policy depends on reconciling concepts that seem mutually exclusive: applied versus pure research; public versus private; intellectual freedom versus intellectual property rights.

In fact, the group's view was that the antagonism is only apparent. What is needed is a recognition that that these concepts are mutually dependent. The private sector has the funds for applied research; but this can only thrive in an intellectual atmosphere of curiosity inspired by pure research, which can be stimulated by the public sector. Intellectual freedom is vital; but it too will only survive if intellectual property is protected.

The unions can play a key part in getting these balances right. But their main role is to stress that the key to good research is a well-paid staff, with good facilities, and secure employment.

## Management and governance of higher education institutions

Summary

The group looked at how mass higher education has transformed the relationship between college and state and has turned academic institutions from collegiate into corporate structures. The role of senior staff has changed, and other staff are looking more to their trade unions as former colleagues become line managers. This has led to some tensions, and could threaten the essentially democratic nature of universities and colleges. The best way to resolve this would be to develop a managerial code of practice based on clear principles that would retain the unique features of higher education while recognising the new status of its institutions.

### The management and governance of higher education institutions

Mass higher education has fundamentally changed the relationship between the state and the universities. Governments want more people in higher education; but they also want to keep public spending down. As a result, decision-making within universities has become more 'managerial' and less democratic. Senior academics hitherto regarded as first among equals have become corporate managers. This, allied to cuts in funding, has led staff to see their unions increasingly as the defenders of their professional and intellectual standards, as well as of their wages and working conditions.

There is still, naturally, great scope for co-operation between university managers and the trade unions representing university staff. However, there is also unavoidable tension and conflict – particularly over issues like wages and benefits, budget priorities, and the relative power of faculty and departmental committees.

### Tension

The extent of this tension varies from country to country and from institution to institution. Nevertheless, there was evidence throughout of increasing polarisation between senior and junior staff; research and teaching staff; and between individual universities and the state bureaucracy.

In some instances, e.g., France, staff strongly support close links with the state, and accept that the state should control to some degree the internal management structure of universities, and their budget priorities.

Other counties like the United Kingdom, with its long tradition of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, prefer to keep the state at arm's length.

The role of the state

The group stressed the need to distinguish between institutional autonomy – which is necessarily limited by how involved the state is in the funding and planning of the institution – and institutional collegiality – which covers the extent to which staff are involved in planning and setting priorities.

Significantly, there is no evidence that where the state does play a more decentralised role, this is paralleled by any decentralisation of power within the institutions. In some cases, administrations and managers have strengthened the central control they exercise as the state has pulled back.

Defining the new relationships

The relationship between educational institutions, the state and society has to be revised. The institutions themselves and the state have to have a clear sense of their powers and responsibilities, rather than each simply responding to the political and financial needs of the moment.

This means laying down clear principles and guidelines that recognise the special nature of the academic world, and at the same time acknowledge the need for a more managerial ethos within that world.

Conclusion

The trade unions are committed to academic autonomy; but they are also committed to defending the wages and conditions of their members, and to national and international standards on issues such as employment rights, and collective bargaining rights. This means they are ideally placed to affirm the state's responsibility to fund higher education adequately; and, while establishing clearly, higher education's right of self-governance, should set out the extent of that right.

Institutions should be free to make international planning decisions, and to set their own curriculum, and research priorities; but they should have to meet agreed standards on matters such as collective bargaining, trade union rights, general educational matters and public accountability.

In practice, this means that:

- academic staff, ancillary staff and students should be directly involved in the appointment of senior academic and managerial staff at all levels;
- staff should participate in decision-making at institutional level, as well as within their own department, including on decisions relating to curriculum and research matters and work-load issues;
- this involvement should be via internal democratic processes, or, in their absence, through collective bargaining structures;
- while larger and more complex institutions will need bigger management structures, the principle should be that only as much professional management as necessary will be employed, and that self-administration and co-determination will prevail where possible;

- there should negotiated solutions to any conflicts between managerial and collegiate decisions.

*The role of EI*

The group called on EI to promote these principles by:

- strongly supporting the UNESCO draft instrument on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel;
- developing an EI international code of management practice in higher education;
- supporting a greater role for national higher education unions in collective bargaining;
- backing permanent and secure employment against the use of casual staff, which strengthens managerialism;
- strongly defending academic freedom.

## The funding of higher education and research

Summary

There is a consensus throughout the world that higher education is facing a funding crisis. Governments want, and are getting, more students; but they also want to spend less money. The new strategies prompted by this dilemma have serious implications for the qualities of teaching and research – at the root of which is the way managers have taken over from teachers in deciding academic priorities. The group was not able to achieve a consensus on the right way to fund higher education in the present economic climate. But they did agree that the main criteria should be educational, rather than financial.

### The funding of higher education and research

The huge increase in the number of students – UNESCO estimates enrolment rose five-fold between 1960 and 1991 – has transformed higher education. There are regional variations in the rate of increase: in many developing countries, students make up ten per cent of the relevant age group, as against 50 per cent in some OECD countries. But it is nevertheless a world-wide phenomenon.

However, the rise in the number of students has not brought a corresponding rise in funding; spending per student has fallen in real terms. This has hit developing countries particularly hard, with expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa plunging from $6300 per student to £1500 between 1980 and 1988 alone. Wage levels, facilities and equipment and research opportunities have all deteriorated.

The World Bank's 1994 report on higher education[i] sums it up: *"the sector is in crisis throughout the world"*, it says. The report goes on to warn that any further improvements or further expansion *"will have to be achieved with little or no increase in public expenditures"*.

### Governments' response

Many governments have come to see educational spending simply as a drain on the public purse, rather than as an investment. They have tended to respond to the funding crisis in purely economic terms, resorting to three broad strategies:

- reducing educational provision;
- reducing costs;
- raising additional resources.

Cost and efficiency now dominate policy-making. This has given greater prominence to financial agencies like the World Bank, with predictable results. In a 1995 document[ii], the Bank says that in many countries, "more educational

[i] "Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience", World Bank, 1994.

[ii] "Priorities and Strategies for Education", World Bank, 1995.

attainment could be achieved with the same or even less public spending". The inference drawn by the group was that these countries had set a ceiling on the acceptable level of educational spending.

Yet this has not happened in other areas of spending. Many developing countries were reported[iii] as having pegged back education (and health) spending between 1972 and 1986, while defence spending rose significantly in the same period. This has inevitably affected educational standards, as the World Bank itself noted: "...the quality of higher education teaching and research has deteriorated precipitously in many countries".

Funding sources and mechanisms

Yet there has been no wavering from the line that more public spending is not an option. UNESCO (1995) says that "hardly any country can nowadays support a comprehensive system of higher education from the public purse alone". Other (publicly-funded) bodies such as the OECD and the World Bank concur: new funding sources have to be sought, and funding mechanisms changed.

The broad aim of the new strategy is to move the funding responsibility away from the government to the immediate beneficiaries. Approaches to achieve this could include:

- student loan schemes;
- tuition fees or other charges;
- cutting maintenance grants and charging for board and lodging;
- promoting private sector higher education;
- recovering costs through a 'graduate tax';
- work-study schemes with student loans and national service programmes;
- business sponsorship for students;
- fee-based research and consultancy work by universities;
- sale of goods and services by universities;
- private donations and endowments.

Far from resolving the crisis in higher education, the group felt that these new funding approaches could aggravate it. Tilak (1997) says that student loan schemes, for example, rarely bring savings in public expenditure. Echoing an earlier World Bank description of the schemes as being "relatively disappointing", he says they "can never become self-financing".

They are part of a general attempt to introduce market forces into the sector, and give greater weight to market criteria. The World Bank is a strong advocate of this approach. It calls for a "greater reliance on incentives and market-oriented instruments to implement policies", and urges governments to adopt and monitor performance-related funding methodologies.

[iii] Watson, K., "Alternative Funding of Education Systems", 1992.

The effect on teachers

This market-led response to the funding crisis poses a formidable challenge to EI. It has strengthened the grip of managerialism on higher education, and has led to the imposition of policies based on purely financial considerations, such as:

- the use of large-class methods whether they are appropriate or not;
- fewer contact-hours;
- less time for preparation and research;
- more administrative work;
- full-time staff being replaced by part-time and contract staff.

The rationale behind the market approach was that it would lead to decentralised budget-setting, which would make institutions more autonomous, more efficient and more responsive to market needs. Yet it has led to government control by proxy. Staff have become demoralised and alienated. They no longer have a say in how their institutions are run, or how their students are taught.

Working conditions have worsened in many countries. Several members of the group reported that colleagues needed alternative sources of income. Some were taking on private contract research for the government or industry, and there were even many who were forced to look for second jobs outside education.

The effect on students

There was no doubt among the group that making students rather than the state responsible for paying for higher education might restrict access to higher education, and would hit poorer students hard. Schemes to mitigate the effect of this approach, such as loans, scholarships etc., were met with scepticism. Loans in particular could deter students from entering professions like teaching or nursing where the wage levels meant a long period of paying off debts.

Conclusion

There were, not surprisingly, differing views on particular methods of funding higher education – but there was unanimity on the need to choose those methods that would benefit education, rather than those which would save the most money.

The key question is whether education is a public good or a private good. The World Bank is clear on this: it takes the view that education is publicly funded for the most part, and therefore it must take its place in the priority queue; but it benefits individuals, and it is right and proper that they meet some of the costs themselves.

EI's view must be equally clear. The precise mechanics of how education is funded will vary from country to country according to culture and economic circumstances. But there are two underlying principles that should govern how education is managed:

- policy should be set according to educational, rather than financial criteria;
- education should be seen as a public good, and not a commodity for the market place.

This will mean governments should face their responsibilities to fund education adequately, and not pass that responsibility down the line to students and their families. It will mean an end to short-term money-saving devices like increasing the number of part-time and contract staff. And it will mean dropping the fantasy that market forces should hold sway over colleges and universities.

## Labour market and society

Summary

The group looked at how higher education can keep up with the training needs of the information society. The labour market is having to change rapidly to keep pace with the insatiable demand for new products from manufacturers and consumers alike. Much of this demand is fuelled by technological innovation, which means workers will need new training and new skills. The problem is that nobody knows exactly what skills because nobody knows exactly what products. Given this uncertainty, the group concluded that the way forward was not to try and predict particular needs, but to establish general educational principles based on quality and partnership – and on a proper acknowledge of the leading role of the higher education sector.

### The labour market and society

It is becoming difficult, if not impossible, to make accurate predictions about how the labour market will develop, and what needs it will have to serve. The demarcation lines between work and learning, and between work and leisure have become blurred. No-one knows what products will appear, or what new consumer demands will arise.

Yet some policy will have to be formulated. New technology is driving the changes forward at an ever-growing pace. Workers will need to be highly skilled as they enter the labour market, and ready to acquire more skills throughout their working life. The onus will be on higher education institutions to provide the kind of training that will turn out graduates with both knowledge and flexibility.

Having prepared people for life-long learning, higher education will also have to make sure it is geared up to provide it. Educational methods that suit students moving from school to college and university will not work for 'second-chance' students. New teaching styles and a new curriculum will have to be devised that can be tailored for each student-group.

### Technological skills

Furnishing students with technological skills will clearly be a key aim of all the new methods. Higher education is well placed to meet this need , given its links with research. In many instances, the new innovations will come from educational institutions themselves, since they are the engine rooms of scientific development.

There was concern among some group members, however, that the growing focus on hi-tech skills could mean too much specialisation. The emphasis throughout had to be on excellence, and on a flexible and imaginative approach to learning, as well as on particular technological routes.

## Training partnerships

Businesses and industries also had their part to play. The precise role of individual companies would be difficult to define, but it is clear they should see themselves as educational partners along with colleges and universities.

This does not mean they should provide staff to teach; but companies do need to be involved in organising training programmes with educational institutions. Many such programmes are already in place throughout the world. They help ensure better placement of students, and could provide the methodology for establishing a complete training service.

To succeed, however, they will have to be based on a well-defined partnership, with the roles of the partners clearly set out. The institutions themselves will be responsible for the implementation of the programmes, since their expertise will help guarantee their quality. The companies will need to closely involved and consulted, and the unions representing the teachers and ancillary staff will also need to play a full role.

## The unions' role

The role of the unions has to extend beyond individual programmes within universities. EI and its affiliates will need to monitor changes in company employment policies to ensure their commitment to secure, high-quality jobs. Many companies, especially multinationals, are using buzz-words like flexibility and mobility as euphemisms for social dumping, deskilling and the introduction of short-term and part-time jobs.

## Conclusion

The changes discussed within the group will clearly have an impact on everyone. The only way to harness these changes is for business and industry to work in close partnership with higher education - but to acknowledge that higher education must have the leading role to guarantee high-quality training.

It is the teachers who will be expected to deliver the training and education needed by the workers of the future. Companies should support them by giving them the prominence they deserve. Higher education should be the spearhead of progress, stimulating innovation, controlling science and technology, and pushing forward new developments and discoveries.

If this is to happen, teachers themselves will have to have access to life-long learning. They have the talent and the commitment to lead this revolution; society must make sure they have the skills and resources to lead from in front.

## Institutional autonomy and accountability

Summary

The group discussed how higher education can maintain its autonomy and defend academic freedom as its relationship with the state and with the market changes. To be effective, educational institutions must be autonomous; yet they must also have a responsibility to society. How can they balance these needs? And how can the state and/or the market exercise legitimate influence without taking control? The answer could lie in separating institutional autonomy from academic freedom – and guaranteeing the latter by drawing up an international convention on higher education which all countries must respect in their policy-making.

### Institutional autonomy and accountability

Higher education institutions need autonomy and academic freedom not in some abstract way, but so that they can do their job. Teachers can only teach effectively and maintain their creativity in an atmosphere of academic freedom. But autonomy is at least as crucial. Without self-management, teachers will become a subordinate body with a diminished sense of public responsibility.

That sense of responsibility is fundamental. Autonomy depends on institutions trying to turn out graduates whose sense of social awareness matches a high level of academic achievement However, the state should have only a minimal say in determining how higher education runs itself, and what kind of graduates it produces; accountability does not mean subservience.

### Relations with the state

The relationship between higher education and the state is not fixed. The ideal is one in which a country is rich enough to fund higher education properly; and free enough to leave it to run itself. Sometimes, universities have wrested freedom from an all-powerful state; at other times, the state itself has surrendered control to shed the cost of running a large bureaucracy.

In Western countries, it is the latter trend that has dominated in recent years. Deregulation has brought about a lessening of state control and an increase in institutional autonomy. This has covered managerial aspects such as salaries and working conditions, as well as educational matters.

Loss of state control, however, has usually meant loss of finance. Most governments have loosened their grip for financial rather than educational reasons. Education and welfare have long been prime targets for cuts by governments trying to rein in public spending.

Such cuts have often been accompanied by the introduction of market elements like competition. This is usually done in the name of academic freedom, but the claim is often bogus. Governments who put in place selection

systems for the allocation of grants are not applying 'market forces'; they are merely forcing teachers to compete for grants. A selection system has to be fair, rather than competitive, if it is to benefit education. The group warned that applying criteria like efficiency and productivity will cause antagonism and discrimination among teachers.

Relations with the market

Cuts in state funding will naturally mean that educational institutions must look to the private sector. But this brings with it another, perhaps greater threat to autonomy. The market will provide any amount of money – but only to accomplish a given purpose. Market demands could permeate institutions and change the quality of education so that it was adapted to meet those demands.

Private funding could also change management style and working conditions. A market-inspired management will be more interested in efficiency, productivity and keeping costs down than in academic freedom. There could be fewer teachers, and less clerical and administrative support. This could mean more work for teachers (academic and non-academic) and a falling off in educational standards.

Striking a balance – the new role of the state?

No country seems to find it easy to sustain a large-scale education system. The group cited Japan as a prime example of a country where, despite its long tradition of state involvement, the government was having to devolve powers to the private sector. But if the state was forced to relinquish control to the market, the group considered whether it could function as an intermediary between the economic and educational imperatives.

The problem is that the state tends naturally to side with the market. It passes laws and imposes regulations on universities to force them to meet the demands of the market, not to curtail those demands. Whether the state can be depended on to do otherwise is at heart a political question: what is really being asked is how free is the country?

As was pointed out earlier, the current economic and political trend is towards deregulation and the liberalisation of social systems, and a corresponding increase in autonomy for education. One serious side-effect of this is the way it decentralises collective bargaining. In this area at least, the unions should stress that the state still has a role to play in setting national minimum standards in wages and conditions.

There is a caveat, however. If the state exercises too much control over employment conditions, for example, there is a danger that teachers may be expected simply to follow and adapt themselves to government policies. They will have no final responsibility towards their students, or towards the public.

Some limits on institutional autonomy may be desirable; but the problem lies in knowing where to draw the line. Again, the example of Japan was cited. It was said that despite the appearance of institutional autonomy, the Education Ministry dominates policy-making. Teachers can choose their own deans, form

their own curriculum, and pursue their own research programmes; but decisions that go against the ministry's policies are simply ignored.

Perhaps the answer is to draw the line internationally, rather than within individual countries.

## Conclusion

The state should not have too much say in how educational institutions run their own affairs. Nor, in today's economic climate, does it want to. The deregulation clock cannot be turned back. Many governments see education as too big to manage, and too costly.

But the state cannot withdraw totally. The effects of this in countries where democratic principles are less well established, could be catastrophic. Education restructuring will be a euphemism for privatisation. Governments will carry this out with little regard for equal opportunities in education, and even less for the employment rights of teachers.

The advantages of greater autonomy could never compensate for the damage done. Other countries will be tempted to follow where the cost-cutters lead – for instance, by copying successful (i.e., cheaper) policies such as the introduction of a contract system for teachers employed in higher education. Such policies would undermine the status of teachers, and of higher education itself.

The group suggested that teachers may need to accept some limits on institutional autonomy in return for a guarantee of academic freedom – a concept described as "controlled autonomy" – backed by acceptance of a common standard of higher education which all governments must follow in their policy-making.

The basis for this common standard could be the UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Personnel in Higher Education. The aim would be not to level differences of education in all countries, but to set limits giving countries enough flexibility to develop their educational policies according to their particular needs, while protecting the status of teachers, and guaranteeing academic freedom.

## Rights and freedom of teachers in higher education

Summary

The group looked at two issues, though both are intertwined: the academic freedom of teachers engaged in research to explore where they will; and their rights as employees to have a say in determining the policies and priorities of their institutions. The group concluded that the only sure way to protect these rights and freedoms may be for Education International to develop a World Charter on Academic Freedom.

### The rights and freedoms of teachers in higher education

Academic freedom can face two types of threat: indirectly, when pressure on resources can mean that the piper tries to call the tune or commercial pressures or issues like copyright threaten to restrict the flow of knowledge; and directly when the State or other forces try to control what students can learn and what teachers can teach.

These threats can be aggravated if institutions limit representation on policy-making bodies to "senior academics".

### Pressure on resources

Any institution spending public – or private – money faces pressure on resources, whether the funds come in for specific projects or for staff and facilities in general. Academics can find themselves squeezed out of decision-making as different groups battle over priorities. They also face an increased demand to do applied rather than fundamental research. Since staff costs will always account for a big part of the funds available, this has a knock-on effect on the type of contract offered (part-time or full-time; temporary or permanent). Resources such as buildings or equipment can also come under close scrutiny, and tight budgets may limit what is available.

### Copyright

The assignment of copyright (and, of course, royalties) has always been controversial. A clear balance needs to be struck between an individual's right to benefit from their own research, and the rights of the institution itself. Rights should not be so tightly defined as to restrict the sharing of knowledge - the lifeblood of the academic community – but nor should they be so lax as to permit piracy. There is clearly a need for international regulation, the more so in the light of the growth of the Internet.

### Central control

Authoritarian regimes make no bones about their belief that they should control their country's education and research. However, even in democratic societies, there are groups seeking to gain leverage over academic institutions.. Religious

fundamentalist groups from East and West are the best-known example; there are other ways of seeking to control teachers, however, that are more subtle, and perhaps more effective.

Putting more emphasis on the need to teach can limit the time academics can devote to research. Performance-measuring and the ensuing greater competition between academics, both touted as ways to boost academic efficiency and extend the boundaries of knowledge, can have the opposite result.

And, most crucially, access to policy-making and governing bodies is often undemocratic. Only so-called 'senior' academics may have an input onto policy-making or sit on governing bodies. Other staff find themselves working on projects over which they have no control. This is an area of concern to the trade unions because it is a matter of fundamental workplace rights as well as managerial efficiency.

## Conclusion

This group raised a range of questions which need to be tackled by EI's Higher Education Sectoral Committee, preferably in liaison with the World University Service.

The only real way to resolve the issues may be by developing a World Charter on Academic Freedom.

## Terms and conditions of employment

Summary

The group looked at how current trends in teachers' working conditions are affecting the quality of education, focusing especially on the growing casualisation of the workforce, and the increased use of part-time and fixed-term contracts. They discussed how unions can make sure that their members are protected; that educational quality is enhanced; and that equal opportunities for staff, and students, are promoted in the face of these trends. The answer, the group, felt, was for a more vigorous campaigning and bargaining stance by unions to combat casualisation, and to stress that lowering the status of teachers means lowering the standard of education.

### Terms and conditions of employment

Teachers' terms and conditions of employment are being separated out from wider questions of quality in education – as if their pay and employment status are merely cost items which have no impact on how they do their job. The group looked at three areas to assess how cash flow, rather than quality, was driving policy:

- collective bargaining arrangements;
- the casualisation of the workforce;
- equal opportunities and equal pay.

### Collective bargaining arrangements

It was difficult to draw out any specific trends from the discussion on collective bargaining arrangements. Unions in some countries were experiencing pressure to decentralise collective bargaining; but it was not widespread. Some countries had no centralised negotiating structure in the first place, and others felt that local bargaining helped their members. It was also said that strong support from the national union could help local negotiators minimise variations in pay.

EI could fulfil the same role internationally by collecting data and helping unions exchange information about collective bargaining trends world-wide.

It was also clear from the discussion that collective bargaining structures and agendas had to extend beyond terms and conditions and encompass issues like casualisation and equal opportunities.

### Casualisation

Most of the countries represented on the working group were seeing an increase in the number of staff on part-time and fixed-term contracts (casual staff), although to varying degrees. They were widespread in Argentina,

Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, but less so in Croatia, Hungary and Poland.

A distinction has to be made between part-time and fixed-term contracts. There may be, for instance, some advantages to part-time contracts: they could be useful in promoting equal opportunities, or to promote positive career development. In general, however, they are mostly used to cut costs. And both forms are being used excessively - to the detriment of educational quality.

This does not reflect on the abilities of casual staff; it is inherent in their relationship with the institution. They are bound to be less available to students; they will make less progress with their research, which will affect how well they teach; and they will be much less involved in the academic community. All these things combine to isolate casual staff from those aspects of university life which define the very nature of higher education.

Academics and their trade unions had to speak out against what was therefore becoming a serious threat to education – and to make sure they had the right to do so. There were mechanisms in some countries to monitor quality, and the trade unions were involved in this process. Others should press for the same structures, and all unions should make sure that job security was high on the agenda of the current public debate on educational quality.

Equal opportunities and equal pay

The group looked at all aspects of equal opportunities: sex discrimination, discrimination against older teachers, people from different ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, and class discrimination.

Unions in several countries had managed to get in place mechanisms to address sexual discrimination, largely through collective bargaining initiatives. However, this had often had little impact on fundamental issues, such as the sheer length of time it took for the effects of these initiatives to work through to senior level.

This led to disadvantages against specific groups at all stages. For instance, the student drop-out rate at the first level of higher education was higher among minority ethnic groups, and they were therefore less represented higher up the academic ladder.

One way around this was for staff designated as a "protected group" to be given a year's sabbatical prior to tenure. Other such mechanisms needed to be developed and added to the collective bargaining agenda. It was widely felt that collective bargaining had a big role to play in carrying out and monitoring equal opportunities programmes at institutional and national level.

Key questions

*What collective bargaining trends can be identified within higher education?*

There is clearly government pressure to decentralise collective bargaining, but there is no apparent trend.

*How can EI and its affiliates respond to those trends?*

The key issue here is for unions to learn from each other, and develop much closer links. There is a clear role for EI in doing research on terms and conditions world-wide; setting up comparability studies; and promoting training programmes for union negotiators.

EI should also collect data and serve as a clearing-house where unions can store and access information on collective bargaining issues and strategies.

This function should be replicated nationally and regionally so that unions have access at every level to a network of information and contacts that can help them with their particular bargaining needs.

*Is casualisation spreading in all countries?*

The answer has to be yes. Even in countries where there has been little actual pressure to cut full-time jobs, salary levels have often fallen to the point where such jobs have become de facto part-time.

*How should unions react to this?*

At world level, EI and UNESCO should produce a joint statement on the threat of casualisation to the quality of higher education.

At national level, unions should campaign vigorously to recruit casual staff, and to publicise the dangers posed to academic and educational standards by the growing reliance on casual employment.

This view can be promoted through collective bargaining by:

- limiting the number of part-time or fixed -term contracts.
- insisting that fixed-tern contracts are only applied where there is a clear need, and that severance payments are made where the contract is not renewed.
- setting up joint systems within institutions to monitor the effects of part-time and fixed-term contracts.

*How can unions link attacks on staff terms and conditions to threats to equality of access?*

Unions need to protect "whistle-blowers" – staff who speak out against any attempt to restrict access to higher education on any grounds other than merit.

They need to campaign for equal access and equal opportunities and to include these issues on their collective bargaining agenda.

And they need to forge alliances in those campaigns with students and the public.

*How can professional development be protected through collective bargaining?*

Unions should stress that they are not wedded to particular forms of employment status, but rather that they want to see part-time work and fixed-term contracts developed where they can be justified, and in a positive way that will benefit staff and students, rather than solely to cut costs.

Unions should seek at all times to ensure that all staff are treated equally, and that part-time staff receive pro rata the same terms and conditions as their full-time colleagues, including on matters such as wages, health benefits, participation rights, time devoted to research and student support.

## Conclusion

There is no doubting the trend towards the casualisation of academic staff; nor is there any doubt in the unions' minds that this will damage education unless it is reversed. Unions need therefore to focus their efforts on persuading both the institutions and the public who ultimately pay for them that casualisation is a false economy.

The bargaining table is a key forum in this debate. It is vital that union negotiating strategies focus on the link between low quality and low wages and conditions; and also that they widen the debate to include equal opportunities for all within the definition of terms and conditions.

Alongside this, there needs to be a campaign to raise public awareness of the impact job insecurity is having on higher education. For this to be effective, it has to be global, and it has to be backed up by good research. EI should spearhead that research effort.

# Conference conclusions

Probably the firmest conclusion - and certainly one that will meet with the widest agreement throughout higher education - is the one the conference knew before it started: that the sector is in crisis. And the nature of the crisis is such that trying to solve it seems like trying to square a circle. Governments are under intense economic pressure to cut public spending; under intense political pressure to get more people into higher education; and under intense commercial pressure to stimulate research programmes that will deliver new products to the market place.

Governments have tried to resolve these conflicting needs in a variety of ways, but they all hinge on the desire to keep public spending down. There is an implicit assumption that this can be done without damaging educational quality. However, the working groups looked carefully at the proposed solutions, and were far from convinced.

The solutions fall broadly within three areas:

- using information and communication technology (ICT);
- reducing labour costs;
- seeking alternative funding sources.

## Using information and communication technology (ICT)

Using ICT to save money sounds attractive, particularly in the higher education sector by using it for distance learning. The problem is that any organisation that sees ICT as a money-saver has misunderstood new technology completely. The real costs of introducing and maintaining ICT are substantial, and once they are taken into account, the final figures are bound to look much less attractive – if the bottom line is your main concern. These costs include:

- cabling and hardware installation;
- maintaining and replacing equipment;
- training the users;
- paying for software licences;
- recruiting system support staff;
- upgrading hardware and software.

A failure to appreciate the real benefits and the real costs of introducing ICT could also widen the 'information gap' within and between countries. ICT can be used to bridge this gap only if there is a commitment to make the necessary investment.

## Reducing labour costs

This seems to be the one area where market forces are never applied. Any private company faced with a need to recruit and retain highly qualified staff

would put together an attractive package comprising a fair salary, decent working conditions, good career prospects, and job security. In higher education, the opposite rule applies. Demand for high educational standards has never been higher. There are more business wanting highly-skilled graduates than ever before, and a general awareness that the growing reliance on ICT means that a new approach to learning is needed based on life-long education.

Yet wages and conditions in the sector are so low that in some countries teachers have to take on a second job outside education to survive. And there has been an explosion in the use of part-time contracts and the use of temporary staff.

Again, the conference has no objection in principle to these types of contracts. But where they are introduced simply to save money, there is no doubt that educational standards do come under threat. The cost-cutting element has to be removed. Part-time and contract staff should enjoy the same rights and privileges as full-time staff. Once this has been achieved, proposals to employ staff in these ways can be debated solely on the basis of how they will benefit the institution, the students and the staff.

Seeking alternative funding sources

There is a widely-held view that the days of publicly-funded higher education are over. Many governments see education expenditure as simply a drain on the public purse, rather than an investment. Institutions like the World Bank make no secret of their view that the best way to fund education is to put the whole cost on students through a loan scheme or a graduate tax. They concede that the likelihood of such a policy being implemented is "very distant". However, the prevalence of such views at a time when public finances are under strain everywhere could condemn state-funded education to death by a thousand cuts under the guise of promoting "alternative funding sources".

This means shifting the costs in whole or in part to students, or seeking private funding through sponsorship, selling goods or services, or donations.

Making students pay more will mean fewer students. It will discriminate against poorer students, and it will make it harder top attract students to professions that are not in a high-income bracket, such as nursing or teaching. It will also make it more difficult to attract mature students who may have family commitments that make it difficult to take on extra expense. It is, to say the least, a perverse way to respond to a need to get more people into higher education.

The conference was not opposed to private funding in principle. In many ways, it has advantages. It can lead to partnerships between colleges and companies and greater communication between the two sectors. It can even in circumstances help protect academic freedom from the overweening power of the state.

But it also has dangers. It can skew research policies, for instance, towards applied rather than pure research. And most dangerously, it can lead to control of educational institutions passing from teachers to managers. These institutions are not private companies, and they cannot be run as if they are. They have a

particular culture which is essential to their function: a culture of enquiry and creativity that cannot be measured in terms of profit and loss, and which must be protected at all costs.

Selling goods and services has its uses. Universities can and should do research under contract to private institutions. But it is dangerous to allow this to become the main component of an institution's research programme. It has the inevitable consequence of further restricting pure research, which is the lifeblood of academia.

## Back to basics

The problem with these reactions to the crisis in higher education is that they are all focused primarily on the financial question, how can we meet the demands for more students and more skills and spend less money? But this is the wrong way round. The underlying question that should be addressed is what kind of principles we base our education system on. Once they have been established, the financial question can be resolved in the light of those principles. In other words we should ask what we should pay for, and not how much should we spend.

For EI, the most important principle is that education is a public good for which the public should be prepared to pay. Market forces simply do not apply, and it makes no sense to pretend they do. However you structure it, charging students for education as if it were a commodity is simply rationing by price. It contradicts the world-wide imperative to get more people into higher education and promote life-long learning. If governments are serious about this – and there is no doubting the strength of the demand that they be so – they will have to face the fact that only they can fund the expansion of the sector.

Recognising this fact alters the whole perspective. The question then becomes one of cost-effectiveness, rather than one of cost. The criteria become educational, rather than managerial. ICT, for example, can make and is making a huge contribution to improving access to higher education, and to the way courses are delivered on campus as well. It can help make institutions more efficient and more cost-effective; but those are judgements that will have to be made by teachers rather than by accountants.

Labour costs should be judged in the same way. There will be savings if part-time staff replace full-time staff, and temporary staff replace permanent staff. It will cost less to cut support services to the bone and shift the workload onto teachers. Institutions can meet budget targets by keeping wages low. This, sadly, is how many governments are trying to curtail public spending. And the result is alienated and demoralised staff who with the best will in the world cannot be expected to deliver the high quality education that students and society expect and need.

Private funding has a vital role to play, especially in promoting research and keeping institutions appraised of the kind of skills companies need; but it should augment public expenditure, not replace it. In the same way, there should be close partnerships between education and the private sector, but the education experts should have the final say in educational matters. The relationship

between pure and applied research exemplifies this. The private sector clearly needs applied research that will deliver new products quickly; but this kind of research can only flourish in the kind of creative and inquisitive culture inspired by pure research, which can be stimulated by the public sector.

The role of the trade unions

EI and its affiliates need to go on the offensive on behalf of higher education. The conference put forward a variety of projects that will help establish the principles that should underpin the future of higher education. They include:

- supporting the UNESCO draft instrument on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel;
- developing an EI code of management practice in higher education;
- developing a World Charter on Academic Freedom;
- issuing a policy statement on distance learning;
- issuing guidelines for members on ICT and distance learning;
- issuing a policy statement on intellectual property rights.

These elements will make up an action programme that will help produce a higher education system fit for the next century and beyond. At its core is the belief that high quality education depends on high quality teachers with fair wages, good working conditions, and well-structured career paths. This cannot be done if the aim of educational policy is to do it as cheaply as possible. The question governments need to ask themselves is not what does it cost, but what is it worth?

# Appendix 1 - Conference Agenda

WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH

13:00 - 15:00 Registration of participants

15:00 - 17:30 OPENING SESSION

Session Chairman:

Fred van LEEUWEN

Speakers:

Fred van LEEUWEN, General Secretary, Education International

Professor Colin POWER Deputy Director-General for Education UNESCO

Professor Justin THORENS lawyer and professor at the University of Geneva

Professor Georges HADDAD Chairman, Advisory Group on Higher Education

Discussion

17:30 - 17:45 Presentation of objectives for the working groups

18:30 Reception

THURSDAY 20 MARCH

09:00 - 10:30 PLENARY SESSION:

recent trends in Higher Education: Problems and solutions

Session Chairman:

Guy le NEOUANNIC, Member of the Executive Board of EI

Speakers:

Bruno LAPORTE, World Bank

Jan SADLAK, UNESCO

Gregory WURZBURG, OECD

Discussion

11:00 - 13:00 Parallel Working Groups

- Quality, evaluation, relevance, professional development, changes in professional role...
- New technologies and distance learning in Higher education
- The role of Research

13:00 - 15:00 Lunch

15:00 - 18:00 Parallel Working Groups

- Management and governance of higher education institutions
- Funding of higher education and research
- Higher education - labour market and society

FRIDAY 21 MARCH

09:00 - 11:00 Parallel Working Groups

- Institutional autonomy and accountability
- Rights and freedoms of higher education teaching personnel
- Terms and conditions of employment

11:30 - 13:00 PLENARY SESSION:
Round Table on the UNESCO Draft Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel
Chairman:
Monique FOUILLOUX, Coordinator, EI
Participants:
Dimitri BERIDZE, UNESCO
Bill RATTEREE, ILO
Elago R.T. ELAGO, NANTU, Namibia
Luis LONDOÑO ZAPATA, FECODE, Colombia
Dominique LASSARRE, FEN, France, for EI

13:00 - 15:00 Lunch

| | |
|---|---|
| 15:00 - 16:15 | PLENARY SESSION:<br>Internationalisation of higher education: Trends and issues (OECD)<br>Session Chairman:<br>Hanna WITKOWSKA, member of the Executive Board of EI<br>Speaker:<br>Pierre LADERRIERE, OECD/IMHE<br><br>Discussion |
| 16:30 - 17:00 | General Report: Gerd KÖHLER, Chairman of the EI Sectoral Standing Committee for Further and Higher Education |
| 17:00 - 17:30 | Closing session<br>Professor M.A.R. DIAZ Director, Higher Education Division, UNESCO<br>Elie JOUEN, Deputy General Secretary, EI |

# Appendix 2 - Participants' List

| Country | Organisation | Name |
|---|---|---|
| Argentina | CTERA | CARDELLI, Jorge Justo |
| Australia | NTEU | McCULLOCH, Grahame<br>ALLPORT, Carolyn |
| Belgium | ACOD | VANSWEEVELT, Georges<br>DECKERS, Hugo |
| Cameroon | FESER | DIPOKO, Jongwane |
| Canada | CEQ | ARLEN, Philippe<br>DEMERS, Carole |
| Colombia | FECODE | LONDOÑO ZAPATA, Luis Alonso |
| Costa Rica | ASPROFU | MAYNOR, Sterling |
| Côte d'Ivoire | SYNARES | KOUDOU KESSIE, Raymond |
| Croatia | IURHEEC | RIBIC, Vilim<br>SIKIC, Zvonimir |
| Czech Republic | TUSRW | HADEK, Josef |
| Denmark | DM | HUMLE, Lilli<br>VRAA JENSEN, Jens<br>LUNDBERG, Nils-Georg |
| Ethiopia | ETA | KASSA, Gemoraw |
| Finland | OAJ | HIRVONEN, Tuula |
| France | FEN | LE NEOUANNIC, Guy<br>ROUX, Jean-Paul<br>LASSARRE, Dominique<br>VALENTIN, Jean-Pierre<br>LECERTUA, Jean-Paul<br>BORY, Jacques<br>MARIEN, Gérard<br>BARRASSO, Diane<br>BURANDE, Anne<br>CHARPENTIER, François<br>DAUVERGNE, Charles<br>DEVES, Christian<br>LACHENAUD, Guy<br>MAILLES, Jean-Pierre<br>MARCHAND, Evelyne<br>MONTMORY, Claude<br>MOQUET, Daniel<br>NIEMEC, Philippe<br>PARDON, Marie-Claude<br>PIETRINI, Roger<br>POULOUIN, Gérard |
| France | SGEN-CFDT | DEYME, Michel |
| France | SNES | BAUNAY, Yves<br>PIEL, Frédérique<br>WEBER, Louis |

| Country | Organisation | Name |
|---|---|---|
| Germany | GEW | KÖHLER, Gerd<br>KEHM, Barbara<br>REICH, Romuin |
| Germany | VBE | CZERWENKA, Kurt |
| Ghana | GNAT | KWASI NYOAGBE, John |
| Hungary | FDDSz | SZABO, Gabor |
| Ireland | IFUT | WALL, Eugene<br>Ó CEALLAIGH, Daltún<br>KILLEAVY, Maureen |
| Israel | ITU | ABAS, David |
| Japan | JTU | NONAKA, Katsuhiko<br>KURIOKA, Mikiei |
| Malaysia | NUTP | ABU BAKAR BIN SHAWKAT, Ali |
| Malawi | TUM | MULENGA, Murray |
| Malta | MUT | FENECH, Joseph D. |
| Namibia | NANTU | ELAGO, Elago |
| Netherlands (The) | AOb | GRÖNLOH, Henk |
| Norway | NARW | ESKELAND, Trond<br>KJENNDALEN, Kari |
| Poland | NSZZ | WITKOWSKA, Hanna<br>MOSAKOWSKI, Riszard<br>SOBIESZCZANSKI, Janusz |
| Portugal | FENPROF | CARVALHO, Mario<br>CUNHA SERRA, João |
| Russia | ESEUR | PAVLIKHIN, Vladimir<br>POUCHKAREV, Vitaly |
| Slovakia | OZPSaV | KUBOVA, Anna<br>VACHULA, Milan |
| Slovenia | ESWUS | PREDIN, Andrej<br>STERGAR, Janez |
| Spain | FECCOO | GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ, Pedro |
| Spain | FETE/UGT | ARES GÓMEZ, José Enrique<br>MUÑOZ RODRIGUEZ, Teresa<br>RODRIGUEZ ALVARIÑO, Mario |
| Sri Lanka | ACUT(G) | PATHIRAGE, Malika |
| Sweden | LARARFÖRBUNDET | NILSSON, Lars |
| Sweden | SULF | FREDRIKSSON, Bert |
| Thailand | EST | THUMCHAI, Rawiwan<br>MANSAP, Boonreun |
| UK | AUT | KEIGHT, Malcolm<br>TRIESMAN, David |
| UK | EIS | FORRESTER, Frederick<br>O'DEA, Morag |
| UK | NATFHE | BENNETT, Paul<br>COOKE, Jean |

| Country | Organisation | Name |
|---|---|---|
| USA | AFT | DORN, David<br>McDONALD, John<br>ROBINSON, Perry<br>SCHEUERMAN, William<br>STOLLAR, Louis<br>SWENSON, Norman |
| USA | NEA | SHADWICK, Virginia Ann<br>KNUTSEN, Roger<br>MAITLAND, Christine |
| **Observers** | | |
| Canada | CAUT | SAVAGE, Donald C. |
| Canada | FQPPU | DENIS, Roch |
| France | FIFDU | SAUVAGE, Françoise |
| France | AIU | EGRON POLAK, Eva |
| **Speakers** | | |
| World Bank | | LAPORTE, Bruno |
| OECD/IMHE | | WURZBURG, Gregory<br>LADERRIERE, Marc |
| ILO | | RATTEREE, Bill |
| UNESCO | | POWER, Colin<br>HADDAD, Georges<br>SADLAK, Jan<br>BERIDZE, Dimitri |
| TUAC | | BOTSCH, Andreas |
| AIU/Université de Genève | | Professeur Justin THORENS |
| **EI Secretariat** | | |
| Fred van Leeuwen | | |
| Elie Jouen | | |
| Monique Fouilloux | | |
| Ulf Fredriksson | | |
| Peter Dawson | | |
| Patrice Vézina | | |
| Anabel Vallines | | |
| Marianne Hanekroot | | |

Governments all over the world want to know how to deliver the highest quality education at the lowest possible cost. Wrong question. The real issue is not how much education costs, but how much it is worth.

Education International, in collaboration with UNESCO, invited more than 20 educational experts to a conference in Paris last year to debate just that.

The outcome of their discussions is in this report – the trade union answer... to the right question.

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